

KARACHI

Sunset 05:44pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:52am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 16°C
Maximum 31°C
Humidity 62%
Outlook Sunny

METRO

South



Bennett, Raza and bowlers combine as Zimbabwe crush SL
Pg.20 SPORT

KWSC gets 20 sewage suction trucks

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation on Thursday got 20 additional suction and jetting machines, commonly known as “blue trucks”.

The trucks play a crucial role in clearing sewerage lines during the rainy season. Previously, 122 such vehicles were in operation, and the new addition of 20 vehicles increases the total to 142, significantly enhancing the capacity for mechanical cleaning of sewerage lines, said a press release issued here.

Speaking on the occasion of inaugurating the KWSC’s first police station, the suction machines, and the electric vehicle charging station, KWSC Chairman and Mayor Murtaza Wahab said that the current city administration is rapidly progressing on three major initiatives for the improvement of the city.

“PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has given a clear vision for Karachi — to carry out development with focus, take the citizens along, and promote harmony instead of division. In continuation of this vision, significant progress has been made to improve the sewerage system at a cost of Rs630 million,” he said.

He said three modern service centres are being established at Karsaz, Sakhi Hassan, and SITE Industrial Area / Haroonabad.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Parliamentary Leader in the City Council Karamullah Waqasi, Deputy Parliamentary Leader Dil Muhammad, Juman Darwan, KWSC CEO Ahmed Ali Siddiqui

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THE newly inducted vehicles are lined up at the KWSC headquarters near Karsaz on Thursday.—PPI

With no clear time frame in sight, work on BRT Red Line resumes

- Construction had halted in September due to rising project cost, relocation of utilities
- ADB delegation calls on Sindh CM, expresses willingness to consider loan extension, additional financing
- University Road users continue to face hardships due to delays

By Imran Ayub

KARACHI: The stalled construction on the much-delayed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Red Line has resumed after the removal of several bottlenecks following the chief minister’s intervention but there is still no clear timeline in sight for the project’s completion while thousands of University Road commuters continue to face daily hardships.

The work was stopped around two months ago due to a number of issues, including the rising cost of the project and relocation of underground utility lines.

On Thursday, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon told a delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which funds the project, that the work has been resumed on the Red Line project and that the provincial government was committed to accelerating implementation and addressing bottlenecks.

Designed to cover around 27 kilometres

from Malir Halt to Numaish via University Road, the BRT Red Line project was announced in 2017 with an initial cost of around Rs79 billion, but due to persistent delays and mismanagement by the provincial government, the estimated cost has now escalated to Rs103 billion.

After commencement of the work in early 2022, the project was initially scheduled for completion by 2023, which was later pushed to 2024 and has subsequently been extended to the end of 2026.

For many, even the revised timeline appears to be wholly unrealistic as the project continues to progress at a snail’s pace and various factors have been cited by officials to justify these delays, including disputes with contractors, safety stoppages, rising construction costs due to depreciation of the rupee, difficulties in land acquisition, relocation of utilities and coordination failures between implementing agencies.

However, following renewed commitments and claims by the authorities that all bottle-

necks have been removed, the project’s development has resumed after its suspension in September, the sources said.

‘ADB ready to consider loan extension, additional financing’

On Thursday, an ADB delegation led by its country head Emma Fan called on Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah at CM House, where the two sides reviewed the progress of development projects in the province being funded by the bank and discussed future cooperation in major sectors, including transport, infrastructure, urban development, and climate resilience.

According to a statement issued by the CM House, the meeting reviewed key initiatives, including the Karachi BRT Red Line Project, urban mobility improvements, infrastructure modernisation, and programmes aimed at strengthening resilience against climate

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ATC acquits MQM-H chief Afaq, 11 others in rioting case

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday acquitted Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM-Haqiqi) Chairman Afaq Ahmed and 11 others in a case pertaining to instigating people to torch a heavy vehicle within the jurisdiction of the Landhi police station.

After hearing arguments from defence counsel Javed Ahmed Chhatari and prosecutor Nasrullah Majeed, the ATC-XV judge, who conducted the trial at the Judicial Complex inside the Central Prison Karachi, acquitted Mr Ahmed, who appeared on bail, and 11 others in a rioting case.

Defence counsel Chhatari told *Dawn* that despite the acquittal in the case registered at the Landhi police station, two other cases against Mr Ahmed are still pending a final verdict.

“The prosecution has miserably failed to prove the charge against all the accused persons, beyond shadow of reasonable doubt. Hence, all the accused persons are given benefit of doubt and stand acquitted of the charge in the instant cases under Section 265-H (1) CrPC,” the court ruled.

Reasoning for acquitting them, the court noted that the private or independent witnesses — the complainant, truck driver and conductor — in the case became hostile and failed to corroborate the FIR and other relevant documents.

It added that the witnesses also failed to identify the accused persons before the court, while the other witnesses, who were police officials, failed to corroborate the version of the prosecution.

“It is well settled principle of law that single doubt is sufficient to acquit accused but in this case multiple circumstances are available to create doubt about prosecution case. All the witnesses in the case are giving contradictory evidence,” the judge wrote in the verdict.

Trader shot dead in ‘sectarian attack’

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A trader was gunned down in a targeted attack apparently on sectarian grounds near the VIP gate of the mausoleum of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, police and rescue services officials said on Thursday.

Jamshed Quarters SHO Ansar Ahmed Butt told *Dawn* that Shabbir Qasim, 45, was heading home in the Soldier Bazaar area after closing his shop on his motorbike when armed assailants, also riding motorbikes, intercepted him and opened fire on him late on Wednesday night. He suffered two bullet wounds and was taken to the Dr Ruth Pfau Civil Hospital Karachi where doctors pronounced him dead.

The officer said the victim was Shia and it appeared to be a case of targeted killing. He said he was carrying a large amount of cash and other valuables but the killers did not attempt to loot him.

SHO Butt recalled that deceased’s brother-in-law Asif Karbalai was also gunned down in the Saddar area around two years ago in a targeted attack.

In a statement, Majlis Wahadat-i-Muslimeen leader Allama Hayat Abbas Najfi accused the Sindh government of providing shelter to banned organisations and warned of strong protest if killers were not arrested.

Cabinet abolishes 14 anti-terrorism courts in Karachi, Hyderabad amid low caseload

Re-designates them as anti-narcotics courts; \$15m grant cleared for JPMC’s new tower

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: In view of low caseload and improved law and order, the Sindh government has decided to abolish 14 Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) across the province and re-designate them as anti-narcotics courts to try rising drug-related cases.

The decision was taken during a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

The cabinet approved a proposal from

the home department to abolish 13 of the 20 ATCs in Karachi and one in Hyderabad, converting them into special courts to expedite narcotics-related cases.

The re-designation will establish special courts across Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and Larkana divisions. The remaining ATCs in Sindh will be reorganised to ensure efficient handling of pending cases.

The proposal aligns with Section 13 of the Anti-Terrorism (Sindh Amendment) Act, 2025, which allows the provincial government to increase, decrease or abolish courts as needed.

Centre to counter violent extremism

The meeting also approved the establishment of the Sindh Centre for Excellence on Countering Violent

Extremism under the home department.

The move follows the enactment of the Sindh Centre for Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Act, 2025, aimed at preventing violent extremism, terrorism, militancy and subversive activities in the province.

In addition, the cabinet approved the establishment of a community health company and the creation of a Sindh government cloud.

The chief minister announced that cabinet meetings will now be held every fortnight, with the next session scheduled for Dec 2.

The cabinet approved a \$15 million grant for the new Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) Emergency Tower.

It approved a grant-in-aid of \$15m (or its equivalent in PKR) to the Patients’ Aid Foundation (PAF) for utilities and

medical equipment for a proposed 12-storey Emergency Tower at JPMC, Karachi.

The total estimated cost of the tower is \$35 million. A consortium of PAF-JPMC donors has committed \$20m for the construction, while the remaining \$15m is being sought from the Sindh government for equipment and utilities.

The proposed grant will be released in two equal instalments of \$7.5m.

The cabinet received a briefing from the Science and Information Technology Department regarding the proposal to procure the Habib Insurance/HBL heritage building on M.A. Jinnah Road for establishing the Sindh IT Tower.

The cabinet approved the proposal in principle and directed the IT department to obtain the necessary assessments from relevant departments,

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Science comes alive with comic characters, stories, songs

Bilal Maqsood and Unicef unveil new Urdu series *Bachpan Bemisaal* to support early childhood development; AKUH holds walk for children’s rights

By Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: On the occasion of World Children’s Day, which is celebrated on November 20, Unicef and singer and musician Bilal Maqsood unveiled *Bachpan Bemisaal*, a powerful new series that champions Early Childhood Development (ECD) — the foundation of every child’s health, learning and well-being — through storytelling and music at the Aga Khan University’s (AKU) main auditorium on Thursday.

Jointly conceived by Bilal Maqsood and Unicef, *Bachpan Bemisaal* is a four-part series under the *Pakkay Dost* banner that brings science to life through relatable characters and stories, heartfelt songs and humour.

The episodes focus on how responsive caregiving, love, nutrition, hygiene, play and early stimulation build strong minds.

While speaking on the occasion, Bilal Maqsood said that children here don’t have original Urdu content. “Either they watch Western content or they watch Western content that has been dubbed into

Hindi,” he said.

“We wanted to make Urdu cool for our children by coming up with shows that are at par with everything else that our children have been watching. Otherwise,



THE screen grab of a clip from the series. —Fahim Siddiqui / White Star

they will simply swipe away and watch something else,” he reasoned.

“So with *Pakkay Dost* and *Bachpan Bemisaal* now we want to give our children wholesome memories of childhood like we have of Sohail Rana and his songs for children or Farooq Qaiser and his puppet characters like Uncle Sargam, Maasi Museebte, and the rest,” he added.

Childhood Development Manager for Unicef, Dr Saba Shuja said that ECD is one of the smartest investments a country can make. “When children receive care, nutrition and stimulation in their earliest years, they grow up happy and learn better,” she said.

“They must be given the right to play, the right to participate and the right to express themselves,” she added.

Earlier, Chief of Polio Team, Unicef, Melissa Corkum, who is also Chief Programme Section of Unicef stressed that child rights are not abstract principles. They are lived realities. “Child rights are present when a child is safe, healthy, learning and loved and they are missing when children face poverty, exclusion, violence and limited opportunities,” she said.

While some selected clips from all four episodes of *Bachpan Bemisaal* were being screened it was great to

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